























WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY GET MURDERED, ROBBED OR KIDNAPPED? I'M DEVELOPING A CHRONIC CASE OF BOREDOM WAITING FOR A CLIENT TO DROP IN WITH A REAL, TOUGH INVESTIGATION.

BUT MR.
CUTTER,
YOU'LL LIVE
LONGER THE
WAY THINGS
ARE GOING.
AND THINK
OF THE
BULLETS,



I WONDER IF YOU WILL
HANDLE A CONFIDENTIAL
OF
INVESTIGATION, MR.
CUTTER, MY NAME
IS CLYDE LUCAS.
WHATIS YOUR
TROUBLE?



PHIL THOMPSON, MARY'S FIANCE, WANTS TO SPARE HER THE BAD PUBLICITY. HE'S MAKING HIS OWN INVESTIGATION, BUT, HIS ACTIONS SEEM QUEER.

WHAT PROOF HAVE YOU THAT THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS RANSON NOTE IS HOLD-ING MARY?

















WELL, WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME CHANGES THE SITUATION. MARY'S KIDNAPPERS MAY SUSPECT SHE WAS INVOLVED IN BETTY CRANE'S DEATH

RIGHT. YOU'VE FIFTY THOUSAND EH? WE'D BETTER MAKE CONTACT WITH THE KID-TONIGHT.

OKEYDOKE. THEY WON'T THERE'S LUCAS' SEDAN. PASS HIM, IF HE'S SUSPECT AUGIE, SO WE MAKE I'LL SLOW YOU'RE NOT ALONE ODOWN SO YOU CAN THROW THE NOTE INTO COPPER HIDING IF I RIDE ON THE FLOOR OF THE CAR. - IN HERE. I HOPE HIS CAR. SO! MR.





CUTTER.





















THEY PROBABLY LOCKED THE GARAGE DOORS, SO I'LL HAVE TO GET OUT THROUGH THAT WINDOW!





THESE GUYS AREN'T JUST ASLEEP. THE GAL PUT KNOCK-OUT DROPS IN THEIR COFFEE AND DRENCHED THEM WITH 1

GASOLINE . FOOTSTEPS.

THE BACK DOOR - IT'S SWUNG OPEN. BUT AUGIE AND HOFF HAVENIT MOVED SINCE

PLANNING TO MAKE IT HOT FOR YOUR ACCOMPLICES, ARE YOU? I'LL MAKE IT HOTTER FOR YOU, BABY!





GET BACK! STOP, YOU IDIOT!

HAMMER CAUGHT ON THE HAMMER CAUGHT ON THE LINING OF YOUR POCKET, BABY. THE GUN FLASH WOULD HAVE IGNITED THE GAS-OLINE FUMES.

á

LET ME GO - PLEASE! TILL SPLIT THE RAN-SOM WITH YOU AND NEVER TELL ANY-ONE!









CRACKS
ANOTHER
CAGE OF
CRIME
IN THE
NEXT
EXCITING
ISSUE
OF
CROWN
COMICS







I GET IT! WE HAVE SOME WARPED SLABS OF WOOD IN THE VENISON HOUSE! WELL MAKE SOME MORE LIKE SLOO PUMPERS!





A FTER MANY HOURS OF CUTTING TO SHAPE AND SHOOTHING BY STOWN MINNIE AND LITTLE HAHA SOON HAVE THEIR SKIIS ZEADY!





















































































EFF GODWIN was dead. The little crowd moved uneasily as Tom Warren got to his feet, his youthful bronzed face drawn into lines of unwilling anger. "More of Vic Raynor's work," he said quietly. "You can be sure of

"You'd best be able to prove it."

Tom's blue eyes took in the speaker, tall, lanky Chris Benton. Chris added uneasily, "Not that I aim to side in with Raynor, feller. But I know his breed. I know what he's lika just as everyone else does."

"Maybe," Tom turned slowly, letting his glance drift over the half dozen lantern-lit faces hemming him in. "Maybe," Tom repeated gently, "I can prove Raynor's responsible for Jeff's death."

He knew Jeff bad been killed because Vic Raynor was running a stranger for Sheriff in the approaching election, a fact that had been a closely guarded secret until Jeff, by chance or misfortune, had stumbled upon the truth and told Tom.

Now Tom Warren moved down the street, oblivious to the noise coming from beyond batwings, the little knots of punchers. Vic Raynor's hang-out was just up the street. It had been like invading enemy territory earlier in the day but Tom had done just that, had singled Vic out and warned him to leave town by morning.

ATER, hearing of the action, Chris Benton had warned, "You're askin' fer trouble, Tom. You makin' a threat like that afore Raynor himself, is the same as askin' fer somebody to blow your brains out. It'll be the same as Jeff Godwin an'-" Chris' voice stumbled to

Now Tom Warren rode out of town. As he did so he let his mind drift easily. Old Tom had been the sheriff of Goldsone a couple of years past. He'd made a good sheriff too, but Vic Raynor and his gang had been too crafty and strong, and had been taking over the country. One day a puncher had found Old Tom back in the hills, huddled behind some boulders overlooking the stage coach trail as if he'd been squatted there waiting for someone. He'd been shot from behind.

Now Tom Warren dismounted, left the roan in a clump of live-oak, and moved through the darkness to the back of the Red Lantern. A vellow slit of light marked a rear window. Through it Tom could see the room beyond. Vic Raynor's office. Vic had just entered. . . .

Deliberately Tom stepped through the rear door. His .45 swung up. "We're moving out, Vic," Tom said gently. "Get your duds. Let's go!"

"You won't get away with this-" "Get moving," Tom snarled. "Fastl"

"HE cabin was partly in ruin. Lighting the lantern, Tom Warren checked his captive's bonds. Vic Raynor snarled savagely, "You'll stop lead for this! Think you can clean up Goldstone? Nobody else could!"

Tom answered quietly, "With you out of the way your gun-hands won't trouble. They'll feel differently when they learn . . . you've run out on 'em after I warned you to. And, Vic . . . I'm not forgetting my old man. He was shot in the back to keep his mouth shut. I'll be back to talk business with you!"

Away in the shadows a horse nickered softly. Tom Warren looked aside at Chris Benton, "We're raiding the Red Lantern. We're running Goldstone from now on. Get the boys and let's

Goldstone was half asleep when Tom Warren and his posse rode down the wide street. There was considerable life inside the Red Lantern. Tom was first through the batwings.

Voices died out till it was so quiet you could hear a match snap. Tom's blue eyes swiftly took in the crowd before him. Many of them the suckers who came here to lose their dust. But there were others, Vic Raynor's gun-hands and Tim Bromley, the stranger nobody knew about being in with Vic, who was running for Sheriff. His presence here indicated they were plenty worried.

Deliberately Tom walked toward the bar. "Where's Vic Raynor?" he demanded of the

keep.

The man's eyes flicked measily. Tim Bromley had come through the door at the back. His ugly face was bothered by a look of uncertainty. indecision.

"Tell Raynor I want to talk with him," Tom ordered. "Unless he's not here!"

Bromley hesitated. "Vic's busy . . . what's the idea of barging in like this?"

"I gave Vic his time. Now I've changed my mind. He's going now. Of course if he ain't here-maybe he was called away on business!"

Bromley didn't answer. Tom Warren started forward. Again he caught motion out the corner of his eye. He would have turned, but he read Bromley's intentions and froze. A gun roared behind Tom and a man slumped forward, his limp hand dropping a .45 to the floor.

At the same instant Tim Bromley's hand moved. It was like the flash of lightning. Tom drew, the motion blurred, timed. The .45 roared and Bromley's heavy face broke out in a surprised expression as his big body went limp, fell,

A volley of shots from behind Tom. Disregarding it, he moved ahead to the rear door. Chris Benton's posse moved in behind flaming guns. Tom knew his presence was no longer a necessity. And he had other business to attend to. Terms for Vic Raynor.

CUNLIGHT was slanting over the eastern end of the world when Tom Warren dismounted. He unstrapped his gunbelt, hitched the buckle, and hung it from the saddlehorn. He walked through the woods to the cabin, opened the door and stepped inside.

Vic Raynor had rolled to the far side. His face and clothing were dust covered. Sweat had left lines. His eyes opened sluggishly.

"Bring your neck-tie party?" he jeered hoarse-"You wouldn't dare come alone-" His voice trailed off as Tom untied the ropes, jerked them aside.

"Get up," the young fellow commanded, "I'm alone. And I left my weapon behind. Get up!"

Vic Raynor got slowly to his feet. He wiped the dust and dried sweat from his face, while his crafty eyes took in the man before 11m. A half grin touched Vic's lips.

"Y'mean to say you didn't bring help?"
"I don't need it," Tom answered, swinging his shoulders slowly to loosen up the tense muscles. "You killed my old man. Got anything to say about that?"

The gun-hand laughed. "Just ... this!"

He hurled himself forward, his attack a surprise both in speed and accuracy. They smashed together. Vic's blows were solid, merciless. Tom

rocked backward, felt the bone twist in his neck.

Though cramped Vic Raynor's body was somewhat rested. He stood even with Tom, had added weight besides a cruel cunning which was his particular brand. He launched himself again.

A second jarring blow drove Tom Warren back. His feet gave beneath him, as he crashed against the wall. Vic's voice was a snarl of anger and triumph.

"Yes, I killed your old man. He knew too much, was making it too hot for me. I killed Jeff Godwin because he got wise to Tim. I killed 'em all, just as I'll kill you now!"

His hand darted behind him, flashed out clutching a knife. He came in-

Desperately Tom Warren rallied his strength in time to side-step the slashing blade. He felt it ripping through his shirt, down his arm. The pain went through his numbed body, touched off something in his brain.

He whirled away as the knife grazed him again, drove in a return blow that landed glancingly along Vic Raynor's head. Dust had risen about them, was in Tom's eyes and between his teeth. He could taste it. Vic came out of it swinging.

Tom Warren parried, slammed at the face before him. The face bobbed away. For a second Vic Raynor was off guard. Tom drove at him. mustering his strength to drive sledge hammer blows that sent Vic stumbling. His arms were out-flung against the wall, supporting him. The knife slipped. He started down, changed his mind. The look in his eyes was different now. It was uneasy and restless. He tried to outleap another blow.

It landed and he went down, rolled to his hands and knees and came erect dazedly. Tom Warren's fist flashed out, connected and drove Vic backward.

Savagely Tom Warren drove double smashes at the twisted face before him. The head went back, limply this time as if there were nothing to support it. The heavy body toppled down, struck the floor and lay still.

HE dust settled. Tom Warren looked down at the bloody pulp on the floor, Vic's one good eye peered back.

"I'm done," Tom said softly. "You'll get e fair trial. The people in Goldstone are tired of blood-shed and killing. They want to settle down, make homes. If you live long enough you'll find they can live without weapons as well as with them!"

THE END





















































































NOW INAI 700 MEN
ARE WEARING JAIL WILL BELIEVE YOUR
BIRD JEWELKY PER
HAPS YOU'LL GIVE OUT
WITH THE
CONSPIRACY!

CREW

CREW

CONSPIRACY!















































































HE'S GOT A DOG LEASH!







GOSH YES! IT WOULD SPOIL EVERYTHING















































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